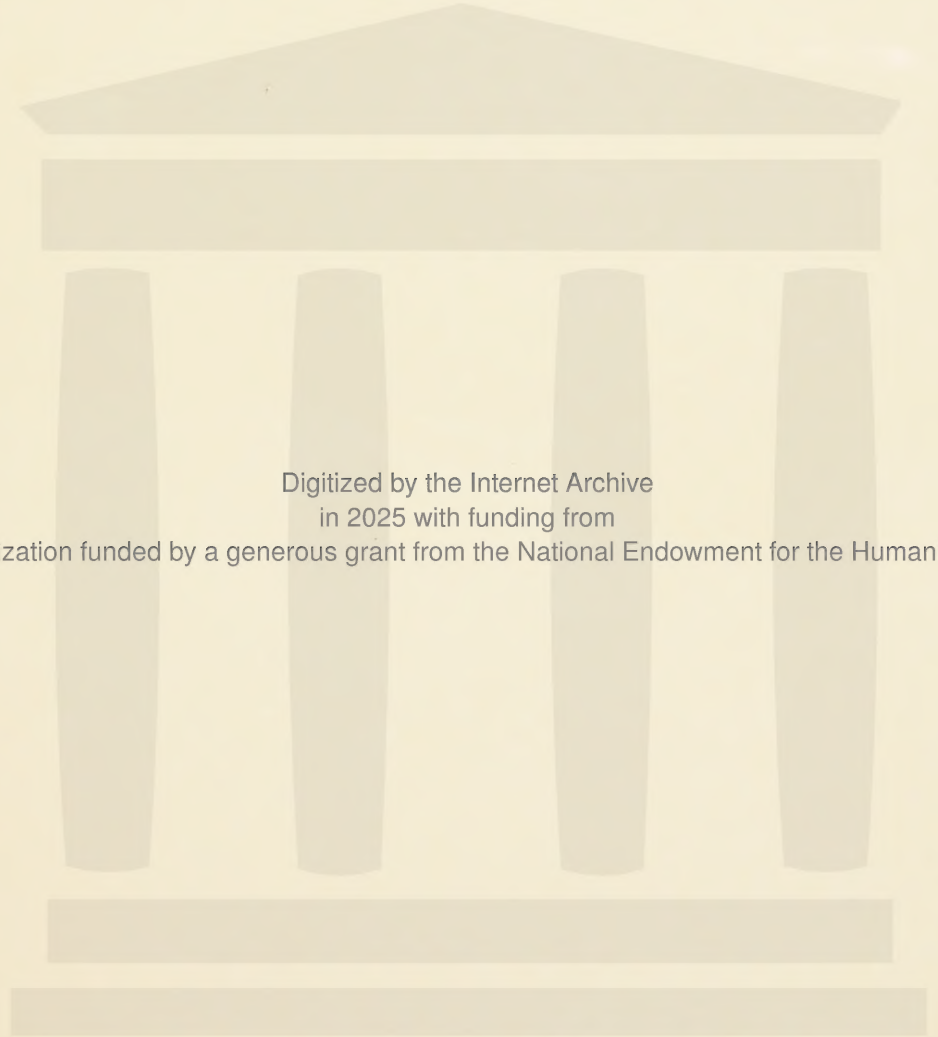

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Stone alone

One-man mining operation in hills near Cerrillos yields dividends of peace and quiet

METRO & NEW MEXICO ■ B1

Toyland trouble

Federal government, consumer groups warn of dangerous toys, products for kids

BUSINESS ■ B4

Redskins gobbled

Dallas Cowboys win 10th straight game against rival Washington

SPORTS ■ C1

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL

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pining for Piñon

JOURNAL FILE

NO NUTS: Insects and drought have kept piñon trees near Ojo Caliente in northern New Mexico from producing for several years.

ADOLPHE PIERRE-LOUIS/JOURNAL

PRECIOUS SUPPLY: George Buffett, owner of Buffett's Candies, treats what is left of his piñon supply like gold.

Years of drought and insects create a shortage of New Mexico's favorite nut

BY BARBARA CHAVEZ
Journal Staff Writer

Forget chestnuts roasting on an open fire: At Christmas, New Mexicans want piñon.

The little nuts are a New Mexico tradition in many forms, from piñon candy to piñon pesto. But they are becoming scarce.

Because of severe tree damage from drought and bark beetles, New Mexico does not have much of a piñon crop this year, said state horticulture specialist Curtis Smith.

The crop has been dwindling for three years. Worse yet, it takes three years for a piñon nut to form and ripen, so we are looking at a long stretch of piñonless holidays, Smith said.

Other choices

Substitutes are available from elsewhere ... sort of.

Stores and vendors have sacks full of Utah, Nevada and even Chinese pine nuts — but imports, however tasty, are from different kinds of pine tree and thus are not the real piñon, according to New Mexico aficionados.

"I'll never use anything but New Mexico piñon in my candy," said George Buffett, owner of Buffett's Candies in Albuquerque. "I won't go to the Chinese pine nut or the Nevada pine nut because it isn't right. That would be like selling Native American jewelry that was made in Hong Kong."

Buffett said the other nuts are easily distinguishable. Chinese pine nuts are usually pointed on one end.

"New Mexico piñon is football-shaped," he said.

The Nevada pine nut is about the size of a large pea, "and it doesn't have much of a flavor, if you ask me," Buffett said. "People will have to judge for themselves. But me, I'm not going to make any candy with anything besides piñon."

Buffett, in fact, was a state senator when the New Mexico Legislature passed the Piñon Nut Act in 1987. The law says that pine nuts cannot be called "piñon" unless they are grown in New Mexico.

The Legislature had previously shown its piñon pride, in 1948, by declaring the piñon the official state tree.

Bad combination

But drought and bark beetle infestation have damaged the forests of northern New Mexico.

See **PINING** *on* **PAGE A2**

Israelis Attacked In Kenya

■ *Suicide bombers kill 12 at hotel; missiles whiz past passenger jet departing for Tel Aviv*

BY MATTHEW ROSENBERG
The Associated Press

KIKAMBALA, Kenya — In a twin attack reminiscent of al-Qaida's well-coordinated 1998 assault on the U.S. embassies in East Africa, suicide bombers in Kenya on Thursday killed 12 people at an Israeli-owned beach hotel and two missiles narrowly missed an airliner carrying home Israeli holidaymakers.

In apparently unrelated violence, six Israelis died in another bloodletting at home as gunmen opened fire on a bus station and a crowd waiting to vote in the Likud Party primary in northern Israel.

Election day

Likud Party re-elects Ariel Sharon as its leader **A2**

Two people were detained and were being questioned in the Kenya attacks but have not been formally charged, according to the duty officer at police headquarters in Nairobi. The officer said they were detained in the Indian Ocean port city of Mombasa but gave no further details.

A previously unknown militant group calling itself the Government of Universal Palestine in Exile, The Army of Palestine claimed responsibility, but Kenyan, Israeli and U.S. officials said Osama bin Laden's terrorist network couldn't be ruled out.

Israeli government adviser Zalman Shoval said al-Qaida's past activities in East Africa and the nature of the attacks pointed to the group, which carried out almost simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 that killed 231 people — including 12 Americans — and injured about 5,000.

"We can't rule out the group that struck at us in 1998," Kenyan Vice President Musalia Mudavadi said, adding that national intelligence had received reports that the country could be targeted again by terrorists.

See **BOMBERS** *on* **PAGE A2**

CHARLES OCHIENG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BLAST SCENE: Police investigate the scene of an attack by three suicide bombers Thursday in Kikambala, Kenya. The attackers killed three Israelis and nine Kenyans.

Program To Treat DWI Offenders Shows Promise

■ *Drivers who received care in San Juan County effort were less likely to repeat crime, study finds*

BY THOMAS J. COLE
Journal Investigative Reporter

Programs that combine incarceration, intensive treatment and care after jail release might be part of the solution to New Mexico's chronic problem with drunken driving, a new study shows.

The study found that drunken drivers sentenced to a 28-day jail and treatment program in San Juan County were much less likely to repeat the crime than DWI offenders who received other punishment.

"Our early data shows this might very well be part of an answer to the problem" of drunken driving in New Mexico, said W. Gill Woodall, a co-author of the study by researchers at the universities of New Mexico and Rochester (N.Y.).

The San Juan County program is the only program of its kind in the nation for first- and second-time DWI offenders, according to its director, Victoria Davis.

New Mexico is one of the worst states for alcohol-related

See **PROGRAM** *on* **PAGE A3**

Inside

WEATHER ◆ F10

Sun with high clouds. High 57. Partly cloudy in the evening. Low 34.

BRIDGE	D6	LOTTERY	A2
BUSINESS	B4	METRO & N.M.	B1-3
CLASSIFIED	F1	OBITUARIES	F9
COMICS	D7	PERSONALITIES	D1
CROSSWORD	D6	SPORTS	C1
DEAR ABBY	D6	TV	F10
EDITORIALS	A14-15	VENUE	INSIDE
HOROSCOPE	D6	WEATHER	F10
LEGALS	E1		

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Former Governor Mechem Dies

BY DAN MCKAY
Journal Staff Writer

Edwin L. Mechem — the four-term governor, U.S. senator and federal judge known as "Honest Ed" — died this week at his home.

Mechem was 90.

"He was an absolute giant in

"This man knew New Mexico like nobody else," said Charlotte Walton, who worked for

bench in 1970 and continued to handle cases up until his death Wednesday.

earned his law degree from the University of Arkansas.

Mechem worked during the 1940s as an agent for the FBI. He was involved in counterintelligence work.

Mechem later worked as a lawyer and won election to the state House in 1946. He was elected governor in 1950, when

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND
SALE
OUR BIGGEST SALE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASO

ADOLPHE PIERRE-LOUIS/JOURNAL

CANDY SELECTION: Carolyn Truesdale of Buffett's Candies helps customer Peter Hobart select piñon rolls.

Pining for Piñon

from **PAGE A1**

"We're now at the mercy of weather and a lot of factors to get the crop back up," horticulturist Smith said. "The drought, a hard freeze at the wrong time and fire all have contributed to the problem," he said.

We're talking about a statewide crisis here, said Buffett, whose candy business makes piñon rolls, piñon toffee, piñon brittle and, of course, its signature chocolate-covered piñon clusters.

Buffett has made piñon candies for more than 30 years.

"It's about 40 percent of my business," he said. "After the holidays, I'll have enough to last me through the spring, and that's it. From there, I'll be waiting for the next crop, whenever the good Lord is willing."

Buffett said he buys most of his piñons from a trader in the western part of the state near Gallup and Shiprock. Buffett uses between 8,000 and 10,000 pounds of piñon nuts every year at his candy store.

He prepared for this year: "I stopped selling piñon by the pound a year ago because I knew there was going to be a problem."

He also bought in bulk. He purchased more than 30,000 pounds of the nut several years ago and stored it in a deep freeze.

BUCKET OF NUTS: George Buffett, owner of Buffett's Candies, scoops up New Mexico piñon nuts. The shortage of New Mexico's pine nuts has many people unhappy.

Guarding the gems

Now the freezer is more like a vault for precious gems. He has shelled the nuts and keeps them in large containers ready to use at the store.

"We treat it like gold now," he said.

His customers said they will wait for the next good crop, which may not come for a few years, because the piñons make the candy different.

"I'll still come to Buffetts for my candy because it's that good," said Peter Hobart, director of Prudential Financial in Albuquerque. "I give it out when I have people in on business from New Jersey and back East. I hand them a book on New Mexico and some piñon candy. It's New Mexico. If it's gone, I'm just going to keep waiting for more to grow."

Terry Cordes, owner of Chimayó To Go in Chimayó, specializes in New Mexico food and gift boxes; and piñon used to be in high demand.

"But lately we've been selling more pistachios than piñon because they are easier to come by," he said. "We used to sell eight-ounce bags of piñon, but we've given that up because there has not been a steady supply."

Cordes, like Buffett, has no interest in using anything but New Mexico piñon.

"I hate to be uppity about it," he said, "but a piñon isn't a piñon unless it comes from New Mexico."

Bombers in Kenya Kill 12 at Hotel

from **PAGE A1**

Israel vowed to track down those behind the attacks and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon put the Mossad spy agency in charge of the investigation. The agency hunted down and killed nearly all the Palestinians believed responsible for kidnapping and killing 11 Israelis during the Munich Olympics in 1972.

"Our long arm will get those who carried out the terror attacks. No one will be forgiven," Sharon said. Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz added: "If anyone doubted that the citizens of the state of Israel cannot stand up to the killers of children, this doubt will be removed."

Israeli troops and medics began arriving in Mombasa to quickly evacuate the wounded and Israeli tourists. An Israeli plane left Mombasa early today with 80 passengers, including 10 lightly injured.

The deadly attack at the beach-front Paradise Hotel, some 15 miles north of Mombasa, occurred about 8:35 a.m. as new guests were checking in and others were eating breakfast.

According to witnesses, a green four-wheel drive carrying three men smashed through the main gate to the sprawling hotel compound — a collection of buildings surrounded by palm trees that stretch to a nearby sandy white beach.

One man jumped from the vehicle, sprinted into the reception area and detonated a bomb, while the others detonated a bomb in the vehicle.

Police said they didn't know anything about earlier reports by hotel staff who said they saw a light plane circle over the hotel and drop three packages at the time of the explosion.

The huge blasts shattered windows and masonry along the front of the hotel, incinerated vehicles parked nearby and set fire to grass roofs of the outbuildings, reducing their wooden frames to smoldering hulks. Stone walls were all that remained of the lobby.

The victims were three Israelis, including two teenage brothers from a Jewish settlement on the West Bank, and nine Kenyans believed to be hotel staff, police spokesman King'ori Mwangi said. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz on its Web site said the third Israeli victim was a 60-year-old man from the Tel Aviv suburb of Raanana.

The three bombers were not identified.

About five minutes before the hotel attack, two missiles streaked by an Israeli-owned Boeing 757 as it left the Mombasa international airport. The aircraft, owned by the Arkia charter company, landed safely about 5½ hours later in Tel Aviv, Israel. None of the 261 passengers and 10 crew members were hurt.

Likud Party Re-Elects Sharon as Its Leader

BY DAN PERRY
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was re-elected to head the Likud party Thursday in a primary overshadowed by a deadly shooting at a polling station in Israel and two attacks on Israeli tourists in Kenya.

SHARON: Defeats Benjamin Netanyahu

Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Sharon's only serious challenger, conceded defeat late Thursday and told supporters that he had phoned Sharon to congratulate him on his victory. "Now we must work as a united Likud so that we can work for our principles," he said.

Sharon won 59 percent of the vote among Likud members, compared to 38 percent for Foreign Minister Netanyahu, according to early returns from 50 percent of polling stations reported by Israel TV. The station's projections showed Sharon winning, 61 percent to 37 percent. A lesser-known challenger, American-born Moshe Feiglin, got 3 percent.

Sharon told supporters in Tel Aviv that his victory was no cause for celebration, and he vowed to seek justice against those who killed Israelis and tried to influence the country's election.

Sharon said the attacks "were part of the campaign of murder and culture of murder of the Arabs against Jews, an attempt by the terrorists to influence the democratic elections and democratic process in Israel."

Sharon will now face the Labor Party's Amram Mitzna, a former general, in Jan. 28 general elections that polls predict Likud will win.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

God bless America, and how's everybody?

■ Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones cleared the air with his former coach Jimmy Johnson on Fox. The game has really changed. Two weeks ago, Jerry Jones made a last-ditch effort to turn the season around and went to his back-up plastic surgeon.

ARGUS HAMILTON

■ Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist underwent knee surgery Tuesday. His aides said he's recovering well. They wouldn't say if it was his left knee or his right knee because they don't want anybody to know which way he's going to lean.

■ The Disney cruise ship Magic was disinfected from top to bottom in Florida on Monday, but 85 passengers became violently ill anyway. They don't know how to track down the mysterious bacteria. Hans Blix can't be in two places at once.

■ U.N. weapons inspectors made their first trip into the field Wednesday. Already, there's bad news from the front. It just ruined President Bush's week when the inspectors announced that Iraq is bigger than Texas.

■ President Bush signed the Terrorism Insurance Bill into law on Tuesday. This would reimburse insurance companies up to $100 billion in the event of a terror attack. That's either an entire city knocked out by poison gas or four sick smokers.

■ The Justice Department agreed Tuesday to give the ACLU documents related to domestic surveillance. The papers won't be turned over until Jan. 15. That way, Americans can go on thinking the guy climbing down their chimney is Santa Claus.

■ Pat Robertson asked President Bush to stop saying Islam is a religion of peace. He quoted passages in the Koran that incite violence. This is a guy who only four years ago was calling upon the God of Israel to smite the Clintonites.

■ The Washington Post reported Monday that Al Gore's book isn't selling well despite huge publicity. It just gets worse and worse for him. First he lost to George W. Bush and now he's 6,000 copies behind Monica Lewinsky's Dating Do's and Don'ts.

Argus Hamilton is the host comedian at The Comedy Store in Hollywood. For more Argus humor, visit the Journal Web page at **www.abqjournal.com.** He can be reached by e-mail at argus@argushamilton.com.

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Thursday numbers
Roadrunner Cash
2-11-13-22-30
Pick 3
1-8-8

Wednesday numbers
Roadrunner Cash
2-12-13-14-24
Top Prize: $125,000
Pick 3
8-5-2
Top Prize: $500

Powerball
1-20-25-40-53
Powerball 19
Estimated jackpot: $59.7 million
Power Play: 5
ARIZONA
Thursday numbers
Pick 3
0-0-0

The Pick
33-37-7-18-15-30
Bonus ball: 6
Fantasy 5
33-20-25-5-2
COLORADO
Wednesday numbers
Cash 5
3-13-21-25-28

BHHC-I-I-19 Pinon Nuts/Disease